

# The Public's Health and the Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Partnership Conference

### Concurrent Session

## Law for Healthy Homes

**Monday, June 12, 2006**  
**4:00-5:30pm**

**Moderator:** Deborah Millette, MPH, Acting Associate Director for Program Development, Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services, National Center for Environmental Health, CDC, Atlanta, GA

**Panel:** Hon. Beverly Gard, Indiana Senate, Chair, Public Health Subcommittee, Chair, Energy and Environmental Affairs Committee, Greenfield, IN

Priscilla D. Keith, JD, General Counsel, Marion County Health and Hospital Corporation, Indianapolis, IN

Tom Neltner, JD, CHMM, Director of Training and Education, National Center for Healthy Housing, Columbia, MD

#### Session Purpose:

The impact of housing on health and safety has emerged as a major public health issue. Childhood lead poisoning, injuries, respiratory diseases such as asthma, and quality of life issues have been linked to the more than 6 million substandard housing units nationwide. Residents of these units are also at increased risk for fire, electrical injuries, falls, rodent bites, and other illnesses and injuries. Public health efforts have traditionally taken a categorical approach to addressing these health and safety hazards in the home, narrowly focusing on one issue, even when multiple issues are present. In the Healthy Homes model, however, professionals who visit homes are trained to identify housing deficiencies which may adversely affect the health of residents and to work to eliminate those conditions.

This session will explore the legal facets of the Healthy Homes approach: a coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic approach to preventing diseases and injuries that result from housing related hazards and deficiencies. The goals of this session are to discuss the housing-based approach to public health interventions; explore the role that law plays in healthy housing; discuss the National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network and share lessons learned from pilot trainings; and, encourage and promote a systematic approach to housing-related health conditions. Tom Neltner will discuss the importance of the holistic, housing-based approach to addressing public health issues in the home environment, focusing on specific hazards for falls, lead poisoning, and mold. Indiana state Senator Gard will provide the legislator's point of view and will discuss 2005-2006 legislative efforts in this area. Priscilla D. Keith will give an overview of the role of law and legislation in healthy home efforts and in lead poisoning prevention in Indianapolis, and the benefits of using housing code enforcement as a public health tool.

#### Learning Objectives:

By the close of the session, conference participants will be able to:

- Describe the connection between substandard housing and adverse health effects;
- Suggest practical ways in which law can be used to address housing related health hazards; and,
- Identify tools and resources available to assist public and environmental health professionals and housing specialists to address the broad range of housing deficiencies and hazards associated with unhealthy and unsafe homes.

Session Convener:

The National Center for Environmental Health, CDC

Resource Materials:

CDC's Health Homes Initiative

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthyhomes.htm>

CDC's Healthy Housing Reference Manual

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/books/housing/housing.htm>

Marion County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

<http://www.mchd.com/lead.htm>

<http://www.mchd.com/leadeduc.htm>

National Center for Healthy Homes

<http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/>

Developing a National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network (by Rebecca Morley)

<http://www.healthyhousing.org/clearinghouse/docs/Article0081.pdf>